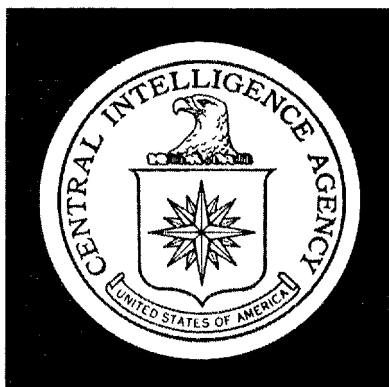


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## MEMORANDUM

### *Special Assessments on the Middle East Situation*

ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN'S UN SPEECH, 19 JUNE 1967

**Confidential**

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20 June 1967  
No. 0658/67

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
20 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Israeli Foreign Minister Eban's UN Speech,  
19 June 1967

1. Israeli Foreign Minister Eban, in his speech yesterday in the UN General Assembly, coupled his rejection of the Soviet charge that Israel had committed aggression against the Arabs with a vigorous denunciation of the Soviet Union's "provocative role" in the crisis. He said Israel viewed as "totally unacceptable" the further Soviet recommendation that Israel should acquiesce in a return to the situation that existed before fighting began. Eban reiterated Israel's position that its Arab neighbors must recognize Israel's existence, and that a settlement can only be reached through direct negotiations with each of them. Israel, he added, would offer in such negotiations "durable and just solutions" to the problems that have plagued the Middle East, but he gave no hint as to what these proposals might be, thus offering little immediate hope for meaningful progress toward a settlement. The speech, which included an appeal to other "small nations," nevertheless may have won support for a rejection of the Soviet resolution presented to the Assembly.

2. Eban's speech in general was as much a counter-attack against the Soviet Union as it was a defense of Israel's actions during the crisis and an exposition of

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his government's present position. He asserted that although the threat to Israel's existence had been directed against it in the first instance by the neighboring Arab states, the situation has been aggravated by the Soviet Union's "alarmist and incendiary reports" of Israeli intentions, which it had spread among Arab governments. He called this claim "a monstrous fiction." The Soviet Union, he charged, "has for 14 years afflicted the Middle East with a headlong armaments race, with the paralysis of the United Nations as an instrument of security, and with an attitude of blind identification with those who threaten peace against those who defend it."

3. In the light of this history, Eban observed, the General Assembly would easily understand Israel's reaction to the Soviet initiative in convening the special session for the purpose of condemning Israel and recommending a withdrawal to the position that existed before the war. The Soviet Union's record, he said, gravely undermined its claims to objectivity, and it was rather a legitimate object of international criticism for its role in the crisis.

4. In rejecting the Soviet proposal on the restoration of pre-war conditions, Eban noted that the Security Council, "where the primary responsibility lies," had also rejected such a course. He blamed Syria, Egypt, and Jordan for having shattered the fabric of Arab-Israeli relations that had existed for a decade, and warned that to go back to the situation out of which the conflict arose would mean that "all the conditions for renewed hostilities would be brought together again." "We dare not be satisfied with intermediate arrangements which are neither war nor peace," he said.

5. Eban made clear Israel's belief that the precipitous withdrawal from Sinai of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) which had been formed in one of those intermediate arrangements, had been an important factor leading to the war. His criticism of U Thant was pointed for having acceded to Nasir's demand that UNEF withdraw. "What is the use of a fire brigade which vanishes from the scene as soon as the first smoke and flames appear? Is it surprising that we are firmly resolved never again to allow a vital Israeli interest and our very security to rest on such a fragile foundation?"

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6. Nasir's subsequent blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, Eban said, was an act of war which made the question of who fired the first shot irrelevant. As to the actual start of hostilities, Eban restated Israel's claim [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] that Egyptian forces on 5 June were moving "against Israel's western coast and southern territory."

7. Eban did answer, without any direct reference to it, the Arab charge that Israel had been supported by the US and the UK during the fighting. "Alone," he said, "unaided, neither seeking nor receiving help, our nation rose in self-defense."

8. The speech contained no direct reference to the question of an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. It did, however, emphasize that Israel's insistence that there should be no return to the previous status quo had a special meaning with respect to Jerusalem. Eban accused King Husayn of having rejected an Israeli proposal, made after the outbreak of fighting in Sinai, to avoid hostilities on the Jordanian front, adding that the King's action "cannot fail to have its consequences in the peace settlement." Later in the speech Eban indicated that Israel was resolved to have access to Jewish shrines in the Old City. On 18 June, the Israeli government decided to postpone a declaration it had been considering on the status of the Old City, apparently in order to maintain a consistent position on the "inseparability" of territorial questions and a peace settlement.

9. Eban, in his UN speech, also was scrupulous in avoiding any specific proposals on the terms of a settlement, obviously in deference to the priority Israel places on direct negotiations with the Arabs. If the Israeli government is ready to make concessions --to the Palestinian refugees, for example--it is clear they will not be made unless and until the Arabs agree to face the Israelis at the conference table.

10. In sum, Eban scored some debating points in his exchange with Kosygin, but that in itself is unlikely to improve prospects for a settlement.

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20 June 1967

Talking Paper for Israeli Foreign Minister Eban's UN Speech,

19 June 1967

1. This memo reports the highlights of Eban's General Assembly speech, takes note of his avoidance both of the question of Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and of specific terms for a settlement, and briefly assesses the speech's success. It concludes that Eban may have won support for a rejection of the Soviet resolution before the Assembly. Eban's address was as much a counterattack against Soviet charges as a defense of Israel's actions.

2. Routine internal and external dissemination is recommended.



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